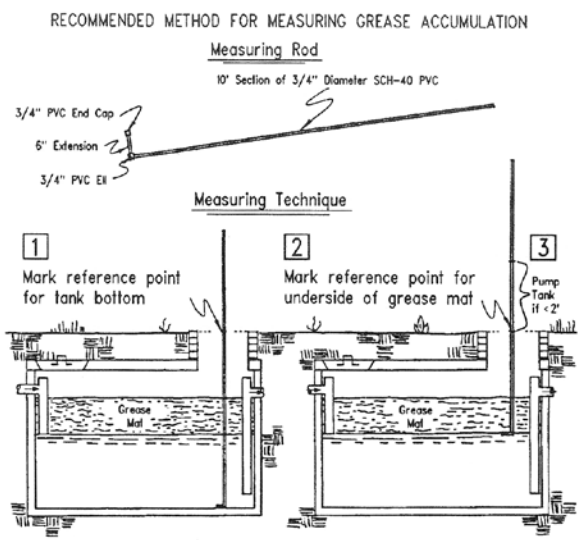

1. Remove the access opening lid and push the measuring rod through the grease mat until contact is made with the tank bottom.
2. Mark a reference point on the measuring rod to indicate the level of the tank bottom.
3. Rotate the measuring rod one-quarter turn and slowly raise the rod until contact is made with the underside of the grease mat.
4. Mark a reference point on the measuring rod to indicate the level of the underside of the grease mat.
5. Measure the distance between the two reference points. This indicates the distance of the underside of the grease mat above the bottom of the tank.
6. If it is determined that the grease mat has accumulated to within two feet of the tank bottom, or if it is impossible to penetrate the grease mat, as specified in Item 1, then the tank must be cleaned to thoroughly remove the grease from the tank.

Promoting Health, Protecting the Environment

Bureau of Environmental Health
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

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GREASE TRAPS and Grease Management Guidelines

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Bureau of Environmental Health
Division of Onsite Wastewater Management
Division of Food Protection

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GREASE TRAP FACTS

The most common cause of septic tank failure for food service establishments is grease. Clogging of sewer pipes and failure of septic tank system in drain lines are two common consequences of oil and grease in wastewater. The best way to avoid this problem is to prevent oil and grease from getting into the sewage treatment system. This can be done by separating the graywater (kitchen wastewater) and blackwater (restroom wastewater), and installing a grease trap to process the graywater and capture the grease.

WHAT IS A GREASE TRAP?

A grease trap looks very much like a septic tank. Three-compartment sinks, pot sinks, dishwashers, and similar fixtures discharge their wastewater through a separate plumbing stubout into a grease trap rather than into a septic tank. Upon entering the trap, the wastewater flow slows, which allows the lighter grease to separate from the wastewater and float to the top of the trap where it cools. The grease will tend to collect and float in the trap.

Over a period of time, the grease will build up to a point where it needs to be removed. If not removed, a blockage will occur, or the grease will work itself into the sewer system, or into the septic tank system. Once grease enters the drain lines, it will clog the soil and cause a total failure of the system. This damage is so severe that the drain lines must be replaced.

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PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT!
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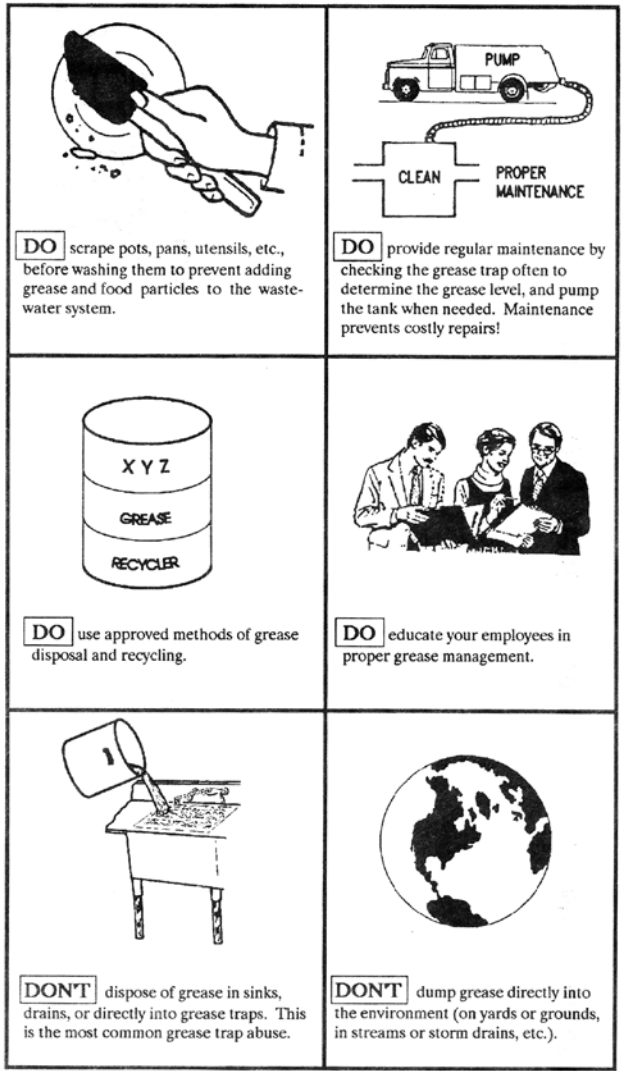

HOW IS A GREASE TRAP MAINTAINED?

The grease trap should be checked, and the grease thickness measured, at least once a month. This can be done with a simple measuring rod. If the grease layer is within two feet of the tank bottom, the trap should be pumped out by a licensed septage pumper/hauler.

DHEC recommends that restaurant managers enter into a maintenance contract with a licensed septage pumper/hauler. The contract should specify that the hauler will make periodic inspections of the grease trap to determine the level of grease, and that the trap will be pumped at whatever intervals are necessary to ensure that the level of grease does not extend to within two feet of the bottom of the trap.

Regular maintenance, consisting of routinely checking the grease level and periodically pumping the tank, is essential to prevent septic system failure. Because of the threat of disease transmission to large numbers of people, it is unlawful to operate a food service establishment which has a malfunctioning septic tank system. Therefore, system maintenance becomes a very important aspect of food service management.

Grease from deep-fat fryers and other cooking units should never be dumped into a sink, grease trap, or any other part of the plumbing system. One environmentally sound method of managing this grease is to have it picked up by a processing/rendering company to be recycled.

Grease interceptors have the same function as grease traps, but are much smaller and usually found inside the building. Grease interceptors need to be checked and cleaned often. Grease from these units can be put into small waste containers and disposed of with the regular solid waste refuse (dumpster, garbage can, etc.).

Successful grease management is largely dependent on the employees. Restaurant managers must make sure that their employees understand the importance of proper grease management and do everything possible to keep problems from occurring. Remember, prevention pays, problems cost!